

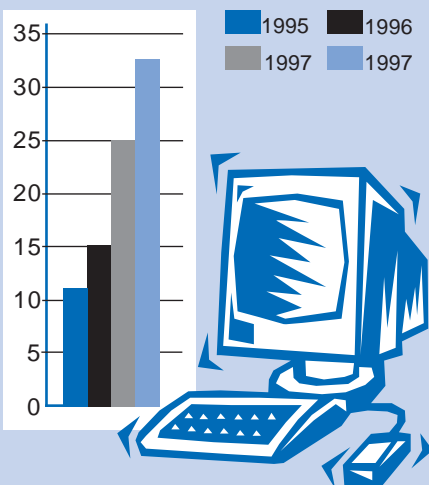
► **A SAD NOTE:** We mourn the sudden passing in May of Don Smuland, director of the Government Audit Training Institute. In the more than eight years he served at the Graduate School, he proved to be a warm, steady colleague and conscientious manager. We will sorely miss him.



The family has asked that contributions be made to the American Heart Association.

SNAPSHOTS

Instructors and students rely on the Web. Instructional Internet use has jumped in this country.



COVER STORY

AmeriSchool's cybercampus readied

In July, the Graduate School will debut AmeriSchool — an easy-to-use, Web-based instructional system. This online learning will feature reusable and customizable content, mentored assistance, collaborative development and a learner-center approach.

"The AmeriSchool system is an organic entity that encourages learning as a student progresses through it. This creates a more live learning experience," says David Lamp, co-director of AmeriSchool.



24 hours to questions from students.

Key points:

- The three phases of learning — self-study, coaching and applications — have been incorporated in the system.
- The participant will be responsible for self-learning. Summaries, used for evaluation, not grading, will help students and supervisors gauge advancement.
- The system will provide feedback to supervisors or training staff and deliver information on costs and the use of the system. Pricing will be based on average contact hours spent completing course topics.

When agencies collaborate to develop a customizable tool, expenditures will be reduced. With nine partners, for example, an agency will pay for one-tenth of the product. Every new student will drive down the expense of a course.

"The major achievement is the ability of agencies to join resources to meet common needs through the consortia that AmeriSchool is establishing," says Ron MacNab, AmeriSchool's other co-director.

For information on AmeriSchool, call (202) 690-4802.

► Advantages, p.2

Since some learners prefer examples and others competency-based exercises, a profiling system will track each person's learning style.

Illustrations and exercises, which use animated graphics, will be tailored to each agency's culture. And because the system enables content reusability, an agency that initiates a course can build a learning repository by adding new topics or exercises.

Students won't be working alone. Mentors — adjunct faculty — will respond within

INQUIRY

As chairperson of the federal Human Resources Development Council's Learning Technology Committee, Anna Doroshaw represents the council on the Federal Training Technology Initiative Task Force. FTTI, an interagency task force, was set up at the Department of Labor to promote the use of technology in training federal employees.



Doroshaw has a well-established reputation. When the White House Domestic Policy Council requested input from the HRDC on the use of learning technology in the federal government four years ago, she volunteered to research and write a white paper. Many recommendations from that paper were embedded in President

Clinton's executive order released in January, which mandated increased use of technology in federal learning. We interviewed her at the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, where she is on loan from the Environmental Protection Agency.

On the potential of electronic learning: Learning comes from a failure to have your expectations met or a failure to accomplish what you're trying to do. Electronic learning has allowed us to do real simulation almost without limit. You can have 10, 100 or 1,000 branches. As a learner, you can experiment and discover the consequences of your actions. You can explore an almost infinite variety of possibilities of what if. It's like a maze

that has multiple ways to get through. It also gives you many opportunities to learn at your own pace and to suit your learning style in ways classroom and traditional learning often can't.

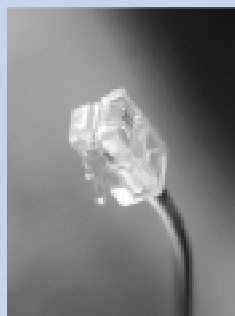
On costs: In government, we are finding ways to share resources by looking at general courseware that everybody can pull from. Maybe there is a front- and back-end specific to a particular agency's needs or work group's need. But the core material is general. We're trying to find the audience, the users, who can agree about what has universal appeal. If there is a universal market for it, how can we develop it? What kind of partnerships can we create to use off-the-shelf software. We can develop modules that we can plug in and pull out to lower costs. If we reach a large audience, and look at the development cost and the potential, we have an incredible bargain. It doesn't make sense not to make the investment.

On standards: We need interoperability. So that when we use one platform to develop a course, we can carry it across, and use it on any other platform. I'm talking about standards for the learning process. We have to rethink: What do people need to achieve a result? We need to design courses for people with different learning styles who say "I want to read it. I need to hear it. I need to be able to do things."

On the new role of teachers: There is a different relationship. The instructor is not getting up like a sage on the stage, but is in a coaching role, asking questions and clarifying. It's responding. It's being a catalyst for the mind, but not leading it. Sometimes it's a hard transition because the model that we grew up with — "I'm the teacher. I'm going to tell you what you need to know and then you can do exercises" — isn't the same relationship if you are learning-centered.

AmeriSchool advantages

Early versions of electronic courseware used an old approach to learning. When put into an online format, that traditional view spawned electronic page turning. AmeriSchool is different. Advanced techniques enhance learning.



► **Reusable content builds on:**
Topic-based course construction
Culture-based example
Competency-based exercises
Dynamic course creation

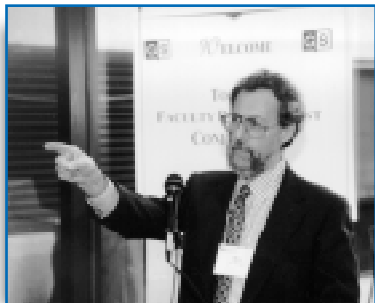
► **Mentored competency comes from:**
Just-in-time support
Subject expertise
Faculty feedback

► **Collaborative development provides:**
Shared costs through consortia
Established courses in federal repositories

► **Learning-centered focus determines:**
Users' learning style preferences
Progress of learners

TRAINING

Faculty members honored



At the 18th Annual Faculty Development Conference on April 10, more than 150 faculty members gathered in Capital Gallery in Washington, D.C., to recognize col-

leagues with extended service to the Graduate School. Donald Shandler, director of Continuing Education, talked about competency-based learning and focused on the growth of continuing education, the emergence of learning organizations and the needs of Graduate School students. After the keynote address, faculty were given the opportunity to network and participate in 14 different workshops on adult education, methodology and practice.

Government Learning Technology Symposium imparts improvements

Attendees at the fourth Government Learning Technology Symposium — sponsored by a consortium of government agencies and



managed by the Graduate School — could choose from 32 workshops. More than 150 participants from government attended the symposium, which was held at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., on May 4 and 5.

CD-ROM award winners



Graduate School director Philip Hudson (center) stands with Nancy Randa and Dick Morton of the Graduate School's National Capital Training Center and rep-

resentatives from Human Technology, Inc. and the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement. The NCTC team was presented with the best training design award at the 60th annual Training Officers Conference on June 8 in Washington, D.C. NCTC coordinated the development of six computer-based training courses with HHS and the designer, Human Technology. The joint 18-month effort generated the CD-ROM, "Child Support Enforcement Orientation."

Did you know?



- ▶ Nationwide, nearly 26,000 courses are taught online to 750,000 students.
- ▶ Only about one-third of post-secondary institutions have planned for Web-based distance learning.
- ▶ Less than one-half of colleges and universities have a strategic plan for information technology.

Center for Applied Technology throws gala

By Benita F. Scott

The Center for Applied Technology celebrated its first birthday — in its new facility, that is — and hosted an AmeriSchool presentation on May 12. At an open house in Capital Gallery, CAT staff welcomed both new faces and old acquaintances. More than 35 guests went on a grand tour of the five-star facility, which was renovated last year, equipping CAT with more modern classrooms, better lighting and projection, and improved white boards. "As well as keep abreast of new technology," said Nat Hopkins, the center's director, "we would like to pass on our success to our clients."

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WHAT'S NEW

► GRADUATE SCHOOL AWAITS STARS ARRIVAL

Ten, nine, eight ... The STARS countdown has begun. The launch of STARS, the Student Training and Registration System, is imminent. "I'm excited about STARS, about the ease and the opportunity it will bring the Graduate School," says Sterling Bobbit, the Graduate School information manager and project manager for STARS. "It will allow us to substantially improve customer service, and at the same time, streamline a number of our internal processes." STARS is replacing eight registration systems of the Graduate School. The new centralized data system will make online registration easier, improve schoolwide access to information, help staff provide better customer service and allow customers a more functional Web interface. The new software's roll out will begin in the fall with the Registrars' office. The rest of the school will be onboard by the end of November.

By Benita F. Scott

► FAXBACK EXPANDS

The Graduate School is improving the faxing system that is used to relay class descriptions, courses, dates, objectives, and sometimes, competencies and agendas automatically to interested students and government trainers. The fax numbers for each course are listed in the school's catalogs. More than 1,000 documents are now online for the FaxBack system. "Our goal is to continue updating and providing students with all the information that they need for classes and to make it as user friendly as we can," says Tonya Barbee, executive assistant to the director of regional programs, who has been working to put more information online.

► NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

This fall, Evening Programs will offer a certificate in collegiate studies, a WebMaster certificate program and a multilingual tour guide certificate. "We have an academic responsibility," says Donald Shandler, director of Continuing Education, "to respond to the changing needs of adult learners. Our certificate programs provide a structured curriculum platform to meet those needs."

